



Superfund Fact Sheet

October 16, 2001

This fact sheet provides information about the Portland Harbor Superfund site. On December 1, 2000, this site was added to the Environmental Protection Agency National Priorities List, a list of the most contaminated sites in the nation.

EPA and Lower Willamette Group Members Sign Cleanup Agreement

During the last week of September, the Environmental Protection Agency finished negotiating an agreement with the Lower Willamette Group, a coalition of Portland Harbor businesses and public agencies who voluntarily stepped forward to participate in the investigation and cleanup of the Portland Harbor Superfund Site.

The agreement, a legal document called an *Administrative Order On Consent*, establishes the details about conducting a *Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS)*, including how it will be prepared, who will perform the work, and how EPA will recover costs incurred by the EPA and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality in connection with the RI/FS. According to EPA Project Manager Wallace Reid, "This agreement is good for EPA, good for the businesses and good progress towards getting a plan in place for cleaning up Portland Harbor."

The parties who signed the AOC came forward voluntarily to participate in the cleanup process. EPA has not yet conducted a search for potentially responsible parties. Potentially responsible parties are individuals and corporations who are liable for past or present contributions to the contamination of Portland Harbor. It is likely that additional parties with past or present connections to pollution or contamination in Portland Harbor will be identified as potentially liable for the cost of investigation and cleanup.

Some Helpful Definitions

Administrative Order On Consent: A legal and binding agreement between EPA and other parties to complete investigation and cleanup of contamination at a federally designated Superfund Site.

Remedial Investigation: A study which determines how much contamination is present, where it is, how far it extends, and any threat to the public health, welfare or the environment caused by the release or threatened release of pollutants from the site, including oil. The remedial investigation also identifies early cleanup actions which may be needed.

Feasibility Study: identifies and evaluates alternative actions to clean up contaminated river sediments and prevent or minimize contamination at the site.

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The Agreement Establishes Some Important Concepts

The Administrative Order On Consent describes how the boundaries of the site will be determined, how EPA and DEQ will share responsibility for investigation and cleanup, and identifies the primary contaminants of concern.

The boundaries of the site will be determined at the conclusion of the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study in a *Record Of Decision*, in which EPA documents their findings and selects a preferred cleanup alternative. When EPA and DEQ did their initial assessment of sediment contamination in the Harbor, sampling was focused between Sauvie Island which is about 3.5 miles upstream from the mouth of the Columbia River, to Swan Island, which is about 9.2 miles upstream.

EPA and DEQ share responsibility for the investigation and cleanup of Portland Harbor. DEQ is the lead agency for upland work along the banks of the river, where many of the historic sources of contamination are located. EPA is the lead agency for the in-water work on contaminated sediments. For both upland and in-water work, the two agencies will provide logistical support to each other as they investigate, negotiate and plan the cleanup.

The site has been the subject of several studies by government and private entities. Sources of contamination at the site include releases over a long history of commercial shipping activities, releases from industrial and commercial operations, sewer outfalls, urban storm runoff, and agricultural runoff. The site has also been subject to dredging for many years.

The Administrative Order on Consent and an attached Statement of Work, describes the tasks to be performed and sets deadlines for finishing the work. It also sets forth the laws and regulations that govern the investigation and cleanup and clearly establishes that all work must be conducted by people with the proper technical qualifications. You can read the full text of the

Administrative Order On Consent at the EPA Portland Harbor website at www.epa.gov/r10earth/. Click the index button and select P and Portland Harbor. You may also request a copy of the AOC from one of the EPA sources listed at the end of this fact sheet.

Contaminants found in Portland Harbor during the initial assessment include:

•polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), •polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), •polychlorinated dibenzo-dioxins and furans (PCDD/PCDF), •total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPHs), •semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs), •dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane (DDT) and other •pesticides, •herbicides, •tributyl tin, •mercury, •other metals, and •phthalates.

What Comes Next

Many tasks needed to complete the investigation and develop cleanup alternatives will take place in the next seven months. First, the contractors for the investigation will be selected and approved. Next will come work to evaluate existing data for the site and identify additional data gathering needs. Computer data bases will be designed and created to meet project needs. In addition, a cultural resource survey and report will be done for the site.

While details about the site study are being figured out, many planning tasks will also get underway, such as developing a conceptual model of the site, looking for disposal site options and locating sources of capping material. One very important task is identifying clean up activities that can not wait until the investigation is completed and must be completed in the near future.

By spring of 2002, the initial planning tasks will be done, EPA will have a detailed plan of work in hand, ensuring that the investigation and cleanup of Portland Harbor can proceed quickly.

How You Can Get Involved

There is a variety of ways you can find out more or get involved in the cleanup of Portland Harbor:

Invite EPA or DEQ to Your Meeting: DEQ and EPA would like to meet with your organization to answer questions and provide information about Portland Harbor. If you would like project team representatives to meet with your group, please contact Community Involvement Coordinators Kim Cox or Judy Smith.

Call or e-mail Your Information Request:

Judy R. Smith

EPA Community Involvement Coordinator
206-553-6246 or 800-424-4372
Smith.Judy@epa.gov

Kim Cox

DEQ Portland Harbor Project Coordinator
503-229-6590
Cox.Kim@deq.state.or.us

Wallace Reid

EPA Project Manager
206-553-1728 or 1-800-424-4372
Reid.Wallace@epa.gov

Eric Blischke

DEQ Project Manager
503-229-5648
Blischke.Eric@deq.state.or.us

Chip Humphrey

EPA Project Manager
503-326-2678
Humphrey.Chip@epa.gov

Visit the EPA or DEQ Portland Harbor websites:

EPA Region 10 website:

<http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/>

Click on "Index", then "P," then "Portland Harbor."

DEQ website:

<http://www.deq.state.or.us>

Click on "Programs," then "Environmental Cleanup and Spills," and then "Portland Harbor."

To ensure effective communication with everyone, additional services can be made available to persons with disabilities by contacting one of the EPA representatives listed above.